

THE MCGILL GAZETTE

VOL. III.—NEW SERIES.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 1, 1877.

No. 4.

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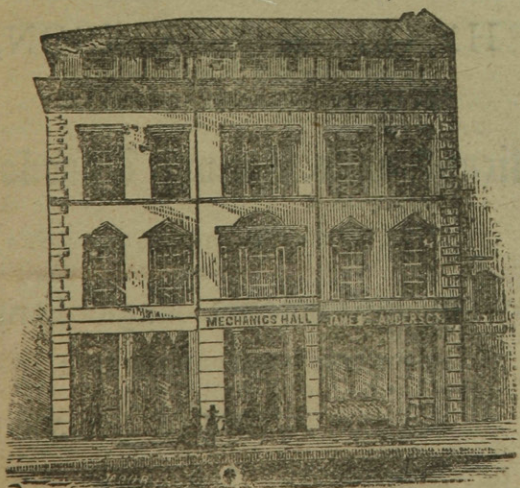
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THE MCGILL GAZETTE

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A PLEA FOR CONSISTENCY.

One of the first things of which the student is reminded on entering College is, that he is no longer a boy, but a man, and that his instructors will on all occasions treat him as a man. In return for this privilege he is expected to conduct himself accordingly, and bid a long farewell to boyish pranks and boyish practices in general. Few will refuse to admit that their part of the contract is not always kept, and that a manly behaviour and an earnest effort at self-culture are not the characteristics of every Freshman, or even of every Senior. While making this avowal, however, the student wonders whether the propriety of a similar admission from the other parties to the contract could be made as obvious to them as it is to him—whether those who lose no opportunity of telling him that he has emerged from boyhood would confess that some of the restraints which are imposed upon him are calculated to remind him very forcibly that, in some respects at least, he is still regarded and treated as a mere boy.

The undergraduates of McGill have no right to complain that the library of the Faculty of Arts does not afford them the intellectual nutriment requisite for acquiring a liberal education, or even for the pursuit of special studies. But there is one regulation in connection with it which never fails to elicit an incredulous smile, so reluctant is one to believe that it can have been devised by the Faculty of a modern university. According to this remarkable edict, one of the shelves of the library is placed under the ban of excommunication, all access thereto being strictly forbidden, inasmuch as it has pleased the Faculty that the students should remain ignorant of a whole branch of science, and that branch is Physiology! They are at liberty to work through the round of all the others, but "the proper study of mankind" is not the study proper for them, and the motto *μη γίνωσκε σαυτὸν* must be written over the portals of McGill.

This conduct appears all the more unaccountable to the student when he reflects that it is entirely at variance with the teachings of the most eminent writers on education, who consider the subject as one of the most important requisites in an elementary education, some indeed proclaiming it to be the propædætic *par excellence*. He finds also that the importance of a preliminary acquaintance with this line of knowledge is unceasingly insisted upon by the great systematic thinkers of the day, who urge that, whatever part a man may be called upon to play in the world, there is no study which he can so ill afford to neglect. "Strange," says Mr. Spencer, "that the assertion should need making! Stranger still that it should need defending! Yet are there not a few by whom such a proposition will be received with something approaching to derision. Men who would blush if caught saying Iphigénia instead of Iphigenia, or who would resent as an insult any imputation of ignorance respecting the fabled labours of a fabled demi-god, show not the slightest shame in confessing that they do not know where the Eustachian tubes are, what are the actions of the spinal cord, what is the normal state of pulsation, or how the lungs are inflated. While anxious that their sons should be well up in the superstitions of two thousand years ago, they care not that they

should be taught anything about the structure and functions of their own bodies—nay, would even disapprove such instruction. So overwhelming is the influence of established routine! So terribly in our education does the ornamental override the useful!"*

The same writer has conclusively shown that a previous acquaintance with physiological science is absolutely necessary to the study of the new and fascinating science of sociology, since a rational science of society must be based upon a rational science of life. Another distinguished advocate of biological studies thus concludes an eloquent address:—"Leave out the physiological sciences from your curriculum, and you launch the student into the world undisciplined in that science whose subject-matter would best develop his powers of observation; ignorant of facts of the deepest importance for his own and others' welfare; blind to the richest sources of beauty in God's creation; and unprovided with that belief in a living law, and an order manifesting itself in and through endless changes and variety, which might serve to check and moderate that phase of despair through which, if he take an earnest interest in social problems, he will assuredly sooner or later pass."†

When the perusal of these and numerous other enthusiastic encomiums on the educational value of physiology has inspired a student with an earnest desire to remedy so great a deficiency in his early education before it is too late, he naturally repairs to the library, where he expects to satisfy his scientific cravings. But, on making his application for the books and plates he desires, he receives the startling information that unless he can produce a certificate that he is a medical student, they can on no account be placed in his hands. Perhaps he is attending the lectures on mental science, and is advised by the professor to consult Carpenter on mental phenomena, but he may not, for such a book would be fraught with peril for the untried mind of a fourth-year student. Another may be following the course in zoology, and feels an irresistible wish to go a step higher in the scale of life than the lectures take him; perhaps, too, he may wish to study conscientiously some parts at least of the evidence on both sides of the great biological question on which he finds everybody, however ignorant, ready to prate; but he is not permitted to give scope to his scientific tastes, because the path leading to these studies is beset with dangers to which his tender mind would be sure to succumb. Another, again, is attending the prelections on moral philosophy, and in connection with the theory of determinism is advised to read Huxley's celebrated essay on the Automatism of Animals. But on learning something more about reflex action and the functions of the different parts of the brain, he wends his way towards the library only to receive the tantalizing information that the books which treat of nervous action, and the magnificent plates which would so admirably illustrate the subject, are beyond the pale of his legitimate inquiries.

But perhaps the student would be less restive under these peculiar regulations, perhaps he would be more inclined to respect the motives of those who seem to cherish the fond hope of training up an army of paragons of innocence and

*Education, p. 43.

†Huxley's Lay Sermons, p. 93.

guileless simplicity, if he saw some show of consistency in the measures adopted to check his moral decline, instead of being presented with one of the most flagrant instances of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. While he is prevented from studying the constitution of his own body, and from learning how to make it the useful servant instead of (as is so often the case) the lord of its high tenant, ample opportunities are afforded to him for corrupting his mind with some of the most reprehensible works of ancient and modern literature. He may read with impunity the tales of Voltaire, of Chaucer, and of Boccaccio; he may gratify his prurient instincts by a perusal of the most obscene productions of the dramatists of the Restoration; or, if he be so minded, he may regale himself with the lascivious sentiments and study the revolting customs of certain epochs in the annals of Greece and Rome, to the degeneracy of which modern history can furnish no parallel. He may consult classical dictionaries *passim*, but woe betide him if he is caught reading the article "Anatomy" in some cyclopedia. An expurgated Juvénal is fit only for squeamish schoolboys, but an eviscerated physiology primer is the only book of the kind which a young man of twenty can read without danger. To boggle over an indecent line in the classics is ridiculous prudery, but alas for the unblushing hardihood of a man who can look over the pages of a physiological atlas! To be well posted up in the amorous intrigues of Zeus and his compeers is an essential part of a liberal education, but no decent man ought to profit by the teachings of a science which would show him how temperance in all things is infallibly rewarded, and incontinence as inevitably punished.

From the absence of restrictions with respect to the literary and historical pabulum of the library, it may be inferred that, as regards these subjects, our authorities have had too much good sense to attempt to exercise a supervision over the students as to what they shall read and what they shall not read, but have preferred to trust in the natural healthiness of a young man's mind and in the influence of sound moral teaching. They have doubtless felt that the students have reached the age when such restraints would be resented as an insult, and would be productive of more harm than good. But why physiology should be made an exception, why, of all studies, that one should be singled out whose important practical bearings and obvious moral influence ought pre eminently to outweigh any supposed disadvantages—this is a question which postulates an answer before the students can convince themselves that they are in a University and not in a Kindergarten.

OUR OWN LAND.

"French Canadians are a harmless people."

"As a race, the Lower Canadians are quiet and inoffensive."

So begin all usual accounts of the *gens* around us. But a glance will show, that remarks of the above nature, made about any nation, awaken nothing but doubts respecting its manliness; and it is hardly fair, at a sweep, to be so severe on a people made up of very diverse elements. For however we may regard them singly, we should find a surprising difference of intellect, and range of character, if we honestly studied the matter. Their history, broadly looked at, is very peculiar. Many of the emigrants to old districts were regular criminals, many more, the lowest of the city *canaille*; by no means the best of beginnings. Not that those parts or even the cities, were totally destitute of goodness, but there existed so little intelligence free from vice, that a high standard could not be maintained. Afterwards, the constant Indian wars

by killing off the most courageous, did much to lessen all indications of spirit; an effect again produced, and this time seemingly for good, by the long Anglo-French struggle. In fact, at one time, most of the young men ran off to the forest, married natives and lived in the semi-savage condition of *Courreurs du bois*—all out of sheer dislike to military service.

The dwellers in distant concessions were entirely different, in the first place, with respect to origin, and secondly, as to circumstances. Exported from France, where their fathers for ages had been ordinary farm vassals, they were here settled in families and with some distinction of district; and when once across, they lived the quietest of lives, a simple, healthy, honest people, now and then no doubt oppressed, but infinitely better and better off than their city fellows.

Some of these old localities may still be found, where the ancient customs and legends still exist, and the richer accent betokens a peculiar dialect. Such was St. Hyacinthe in the days when shoe factories were unknown, and the voice of the engine was not in the land. You passed along the streets and men touched their hats to "Monseigneur." You walked through the market-place, and there, in the shade of her red *charette*, smoked the seller of potatoes and wheat. The strange dirty old beggar leading a little grey dog, demanded his sou; and many were the stores of "*Bonhomme la Boucane*"—how he never washed; how he held mysterious tryst with Satan; how the dog lived altogether without food; and how both of them never slept. Here too loitered the sun-browned hooded maiden, there the enterprising apple-man with his long home-spun coat and monotonous cry. Behold in that nook how gracefully coquette Marie chews gum, while all the Francois and Telesphores smoke round and flatter like Greeks.

The scene is full to overflowing with characters worthy a Hogarth; everywhere stretches the line of carts; everywhere bags of pease and large pale cabbages block the path; on all sides run streams and cross-streams of abundant chatter; for this is a great day, and comes but once *les quinze jours*. Down somewhere in the corners, we know there must sit a white-faced nun selling the latest charms and longest rosaries to pious matrons, and ever between the pauses muttering words of prayer. And then the talk—the old strange stories, that centuries ago were the folk-lore of France, all about Malbrouck, and great men now half forgotten in *la patrie* itself.

Wait till evening comes and the *habitants*, whip in hand gather their *charrettes*, the girls sitting below. Suddenly the "*Au-revoirs*" cease, and a voice calls out

"Malbrouck est mort!"

Startled as you may be, you are still more surprised when another responds,

"C'est pas vra!"

"Oui, il est mort."

"C'est pas vra!"

With *vim*.—

"Il est mort et enterre"

"Tu dis ça pour me blaguer."

and the whole bass chorus replies:

"Ca va ma-a-al."

Then the assembly scatters in every direction, and the country roads are filled with a line of racing carts, driven by reckless gay Lotharios, or staid half-shaven men. Such is the Saturday appearance of a market town; the farm life is, from what we can observe, quite monotonous.

Another type is that presented by Kamouraska, opposite Murray Bay, once so important a place as to form a judicial centre, Montreal and Quebec being the only others. The

town has an air of faded glory, like the shell of grandeur mourning its substance; just such a locality where always clings that feeling with which we invest the last of a race. The air is strangely foreign,—so Pompeii-like that the advances of trade seem jarringly out of place. The houses are long and rambling, with many windows, a gallery, a wide expanse of Swiss roof and oddities of architecture peculiar to themselves. Inside, there are low-ceiled spacious rooms, elaborate frieze-work, and here and there pieces of antiquated, spindle furniture, “as neat as a pin.”

The people are honest, friendly and very polite, always touching the hat and saluting by the seignorial title, and they are usually of fine build, often large-limbed, and possessing light hair; but the smaller, distinctively Gallic physique is most frequently met; both types different from those of the city. The feudal regime, which lingered seventy years longer here than in France, was abolished in 1859, but in such quarters as this the atmosphere of vassalage is yet supreme.

Eastward lies the *demesne*, containing one of the three most ancient manor-houses of Lower Canada, and it truly is a fine old place. Walking along, you meet a gate leading up a wide good road, to what looks like an orchard and pine tree park. That road was once the *chemin banal*, the last a feudal word connected with the manor. On passing up to the inner *porte* one sees on both sides of him, wide splendid fields of growing grain—part of the seignorial lands. Opening the gate he meets a sight quite rare in the district—a large paved court, shaded with tall elms, and looking delightfully cool. To the left, stands a quaint stone well-house, and the right exhibits at some distance an irregular cluster of farm buildings. Straight opposite is the *manoir* itself, older looking than the elms—a long, very long, low building, one story and a half high, covered by a sloping roof and surrounded by a gallery. The walls are of painted, stone while the shutters, quite prominent where there are so many windows, are of that slender elaborate style, peculiar to everything French; and ancient. In rear there are curious wings, with small peaked windows, and at the end the wall, instead of being flat forms an obtuse angle, and is shingled to the level of the eaves. If the outside is strange, the interior is like unto it, inhabited as it is by a branch of the powerful Tache clan. In the time of the Hon., Jean Baptiste, it was still luxurious, and his widow managed it “in a similar manner,” as the Euclids say. But the present Seigneur is an unmitigated spendthrift, and has already lost ground-rent and revenues. He has caused a beautiful chateau to be built on the summit of his *demesne*, looking out to sea, but it still remains unfinished and the place is for sale.

Beyond the farm-buildings, at a little distance, is the *moulin banal*, whither the vassals were compelled to carry their corn, and pay the price for grinding imposed by the Seigneur. This particular mill is at present in ruins, consisting of a round thick wall about twenty feet high, built of grey stone. On both sides there had been small doors, and between them, on the inside was a recess about a foot deep by three wide, and running all the way up, used apparently as a socket for the sails or other machinery.

The people around are sturdy, and bear in unmistakeable traits the impress of the ancient *regime*. As a consequence, the men are bad farmers and exceedingly conservative, a fact which hinders every attempt to improve them. “As our fathers did, so shall we and our children do,” is the old, old argument which keeps the wood-sawyer's son a wood-sawyer still, and makes the race a proverb for want of enterprise. But there is something most promising in the loyalty with which they stick to old fashions, and when

education shall have opened the close-shut eyes there is as grand a future before them yet, as before the quicker-witted Anglo-Saxon.

DISTRIBUTION OF ENERGY.

In average communities, and under ordinary circumstances, the desire to work has to be restrained rather than fostered, and measures are taken more for the restriction of energy than for its encouragement.

It is generally the case, that men are too eager to engage in a profitable pursuit, and that the supply of workmen is more than commensurate with the demand for them. The natural consequence is, that to obviate the difficulties which must arise from such a state of affairs, either, on the one hand, the spheres of these popular pursuits must be enlarged, or on the other, new avenues to success, new outlets for the already overflowing tide of ambition must be opened and provided.

Such, we say, is the case in most communities. Such, however, we regret to say, is by no means the condition of affairs at McGill.

Here at college, to speak plainly, the range of pursuits is altogether too wide, and the energy of our students, instead of being concentrated upon one or two points, in which case success would be certain, is distributed with inevitable weakness over a field much too large, much too extensive for the number and capacity of the students.

It is generally allowed that the chief aim of students in attending college is to acquire an extended education. Of the truth of this there can be no doubt. College life, however, would be barren, and to a certain extent useless, were it not for those organizations usually found in such establishments, which but for their extreme evanescence at McGill might be called college institutions.

There are, *exempli gratia*, for Arts students, a Literary Society, a Glee Club, a Football Club, a Sports Association, a Snow-Shoe Club, a Skating Club, a Founder's Festival Committee, a Reading-Room Committee, a Gazette Committee; and for theological students a Debating Club, a Base Ball Club and a Croquet Club, as well as many other less important organizations, each of which at present demands attention, and all of which militate one against the other.

It must be manifest that were some of these virtually obliterated, the remainder would be much better attended to than at present, when, even were every student an Admirable Crichton, some must be neglected. If our literary energy were expended in one good literary club, and in trying to render the college gazette what I trust it will be, not only a financial but a literary success; were our superfluous muscle applied to football, and were our tastes for sociability gratified and sated by an annual dinner, we would have results far more satisfactory and much more pleasant than at present, and we could point to our college institutions with pride, instead of seeing innumerable enterprises carried *ad nauseam*, sickening and dying so frequently.

Again, the men in college willing to do their fair share of work in these matters, are few in number, the whole work being left to seven or eight, who find their efforts rewarded by the same officiousness, and their motives and intentions misconstrued and misrepresented.

Through the columns of our college organ, matters like these must be ventilated, and we trust that the pure breezes generally found where a little is done, but done well, will soon displace and dispel the mixed, murky clouds, existing where everything is attempted, but nothing accomplished.

THE MCGILL GAZETTE.

1st FEBRUARY, 1877.

Editors for 1876-77.

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SELDOM or never has it been the case, that Englishmen, in any branch of science, trade, or adventure, have been afraid to risk competition with rivals of other nationalities. So true is this that in many departments, the name British is regarded as a synonym for cosmopolitan, and the liberal principles which have governed and regulated the commerce of the mother land, have had their natural normal effect in making her the foremost commercial power of the world. If, in the domain of science Britain has not occupied the same relative standing, it is owing, not to lack of genius, not to a want of talented able men but rather to a spirit of conservatism, prompted by a feeling the direct opposite of that which has always guided her commercial enterprises. Though to a certain extent, this protectionist enactment—to apply a commercial phrase to science—might, when displayed in reference to foreigners and aliens, be justifiable; it becomes utterly, totally inexplicable when shown towards fellow-subjects in a different clime, who are though remote from the seat of Imperial Government, nevertheless British subjects, in every sense of the word. British medical men have always held the foremost rank of any in Europe. The profession as a whole is one which should be, and, we are rejoiced to say generally is liberal and generous in its ideas, and the standard though high has never excluded genius and merit when joined to the requisite practical training. It is simply a duty which medical men have to perform to their profession, and to the public, to exclude empirics, quacks, and incompetent men. This we say is a duty and it has hitherto been faithfully, scrupulously carried out with good results to all concerned. Petty jealousy or timid fear of competition have seldom shut the door on true worth; and though Britons look with comparative distrust on foreign physicians, colonial surgeons, especially Canadians, have been always treated as worthy of all confidence and respect. However, one morning last week the inhabitants of Canada, long in the habit of congratulating themselves upon the high standing, of their medical schools, and boastful of the fact that the degrees of one of our colleges—our own Alma Mater—were accepted and recognised by the British Army and Navy

were rudely awakened from their happy dreams by the report that the officers of the British Custom House, forsooth, had decided to clear no Canadian steamers, unless the surgeons on board are provided with British diplomas. This rather startling fact was announced in a letter from Sir Hugh Allan to Dr. Campbell, the honoured head of our medical faculty. Sir Hugh in this matter displays the same spirit which has characterized him in all his actions in Canada, that is, of not tacitly accepting the badge of inferiority simply because we are colonists; and for this as Canadians we sincerely thank him. And more particularly, for his testimony as to the comparative value of English and Canadian medical degrees, as McGill men we again thank him. As Sir Hugh says "for the last twenty years "we have carried Canadian surgeons on board our steamers, "as well as English ones, and the result of our experience "is, that the Canadian surgeons are equal, both in professional acquirements and in gentlemanly bearing to those we "receive from the colleges in England. Therefore I am not "prepared to submit to this requirement, inasmuch as I "think it great injustice to the institutions of this country "as well as to the young men who study therein, in fact "it is a slight upon the Dominion itself." Sir Hugh has written to the British Government on this subject, and this combined with the expression of public opinion in the press of the country, will, we have no doubt, procure from the Imperial Government a speedy repeal of this iniquitous regulation which has been prompted, as we have said, by the most despicable professional jealousy and conceived in a spirit, different far from that true British spirit of fair play which it should be the aim of every true Briton to foster and encourage.

THE *Witness*, which considers our columns "readable and "interesting under the present management," contained some remarks a few evenings ago, on the *Académie Commerciale* Bill, noticed in our last. It does not agree with us in its estimate of that institution; but calls attention to the fact, that the French Government will have something to say in the matter, as far, at least, as provisions for efficiency are concerned. We are glad to learn that such is the case, but think that it will take a pretty thorough reform to make the stuff required out of the material at hand. A good staff would certainly be the best of beginnings; but not the only one required, and we take the liberty of saying, that the average student, even be that average high, is in no way fitted to take degrees, after so short a term as the *Académie* proposes.

—Dr. Dawson is about to deliver a course of special lectures on the "Timber Trees of Canada," in connection with the regular botanical work.

THERE is a class, which we are glad to find is small, who seem to wilfully sink themselves in the delusion that our own University is not of the highest rank. They point to the large numbers attending American colleges; they rave about the simplicity of the course; they make comparisons unfavorable to the buildings; and they crown all by showing, in the light of their own experience, the invincible stupidity of the student. To such as these we recommend the perusal of a late article in the London *Mining Journal*. It treats at full length, and in the highest terms, of our whole course and Faculties, leaving no doubt of the efficacy of the latter, and the thoroughness of our curriculum; demonstrating in the plainest possible manner, the high opinion concerning us, which prevails in the English mind.

In addition to this we should recommend a little travel in our own country and the neighbouring Union, especially to the very places of which they talk in such lofty strains. We are convinced that they would return silenced, if not completely satisfied, and ready to settle down like men to the "first English college in America."

THE students owe their heartiest thanks to the Faculty for their kindness in making a rink upon the grounds. It has now been fit for skating for several days, and although small, still after the experiences of last year it would have been hazardous to attempt making a larger one. The Hockey Club (of which we give the list of officers in another column) has had some practice already, and we hope will be able to make a fair stand against the city clubs, after it has had a little more play.

A vote of thanks is also due to Mr. Howard, the secretary of the club, for the forethought and trouble in getting good sticks from Halifax. Were it not for this the club would have been compelled to put up with what makeshifts they could find, a serious matter when a doubtful match is about to be played.

WE trust our readers will not take offence at the following remarks. We have borne the nuisance patiently for a long while, and can keep silence no longer. What we refer to is the habit of some of our fellow students of scribbling upon and defacing the notices posted up on the bulletin board. Why anyone can take pleasure in such a thing it is difficult to perceive, except it be to display his wit, or attempt at wit, in a prominent place. We hope that the Freshmen will take this hint; we say Freshmen, because if it be any of the older students who so disgrace themselves it is hopeless to speak to them,—we believe heartily in the proverb—"There's no fool like an old fool;" of course the word *old* is only comparative here.

If students despise keeping their light hid under a bushel, or cannot contain their exuberant wit, let them send their lucubrations to the *Gazette* and we, the editors thereof, will sift the wheat from the chaff, and lay it (the wheat) before the eyes of an admiring world, always premising that there be some wheat in the heap.

In connection with this there is another matter we may speak of, namely the carving of names, etc., on the college desks and benches. This habit is more easily explained, for everyone likes to leave some memento of his presence in the "studious cloister's pale," even though it be such a monument of misspent time as words cut in the desks during lecture hours, to the detriment of other people's property and his own penknife.

U. L. S.

The remaining meetings of the Society promise to be even more interesting and instructive than those which have already been held. On the 6th instant, the thirteenth public debate will be held in the Association Hall, and the subject is: "Should the Imperial Federation be looked forward to as the political destiny of Canada?—Is there 'then independence?'" There will also be a reading and an address from the president.

On the 9th instant, an innovation will be made in the form of the evening's exercises. The programme consists of four short essays, on four poets, with selections from their works. The poets and essayists are as follows: Byron, Mr. Keller; Moore, Mr. Lonergan; Longfellow, Mr. Monk; Tennyson, Mr. McLean.

On the evening of the 16th the subject of debate is, "Has 'increased wealth been favorable to the Morality of Nations?'" An essay will be delivered by Mr. C. H. Stephens; the reader is not yet appointed.

The 22nd will be given up to an evening with the novelists; papers to be given on Dickens, Thackeray, Lytton and Scott.

On the 2nd proximo a debate will take place on a philosophical subject; and the debaters are to be mostly students in the honor class in philosophy. The form of the question is, we believe, "Is the Utilitarian theory of Morals the true 'one?'"

It will thus be seen, that this month is well provided for, and we trust, that the efforts of the Committee to arrange interesting meetings will result in remarkably large attendances, and increased interest in the proceedings. We hear further, that thanks to the energetic exertions of the indefatigable Treasurer the funds of the Society are in a flourishing condition.

As we go to press, we hear that arrangements are about to be made with the celebrated reader, Mr. Vandenhoff, to give an entertainment under the auspices of the Society.

—Students complain of the bad state in which the avenue across the Campus is kept.

—The Annual Glee Club Concert, in aid of the General Hospital, is arranged for Tuesday 13th. The members are in their usual good training and the programme is excellent throughout. Tickets may be obtained at De Zouche's and Hill's, or from any of the committee (A. D. Taylor, Secretary.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

Editors McGill Gazette :—

GENTLEMEN,—If you can give me space in the *Gazette* I would like to make a few remarks upon English language and literature, as taken up by McGill. One of our professors, in the first lecture he gave after the holidays, spoke shortly about the inability of most of the students to express themselves clearly in their written examinations.

I think that the examiners can expect little else in the present state of affairs. The entrance examination in English is mere nonsense. It consists, as all our students know, of writing a short piece from dictation, which any average candidate can do well enough to escape failure. It seems to me to be merely a courteous way of giving an examination in spelling; but undergraduates in a University should be able to do much more than spell; they should also be able to express their thoughts easily and grammatically, and the examination should be such as to ascertain whether or not they can do this. I believe that many men lose marks in examinations, because their words do not give the meaning which they had intended them to convey, and this is especially liable to happen to students who have not paid much attention to their handwriting.

It is true that the course up to Christmas in the first year remedies a great deal of this, but we do not think that the students, even with this three months preparation, are fitted to take up Anglo-Saxon language and literature; and if they are, I think that something more interesting to general students might profitably be taken up in the ordinary course; that the whole spring term should be spent in going through advanced grammar, and in writing short essays, etc. And it is unfair to expect students to prepare the latter part of Spaulding's literature for the intermediate examination without having received aid from their professor.

I wish also to give some remarks concerning the honour work in English. Firstly, why should Marlowe be read and not Ben Jonson? Not that Marlowe is unworthy of being studied; he has that which some of our mincing modern writers want very badly—life and force. I only wish to say that he should not be preferred before Jonson, who is generally acknowledged to be the greater writer. And why should *all* Shakespeare's plays be inflicted upon us? Shakespeare wrote much trash, although it is almost heresy to say anything against him now-a-days. In my own opinion Milton was a greater poet; certainly he was a purer.

Again, why should so much of Pope be given to us, and nothing of Gray, of Cowper, of Coleridge, of Wordsworth? Nothing of Childe Harold, a noble work, which far transcends any of Pope's tersely monotonous verse? The soul of poetry is enthusiasm; where can you find enthusiasm in Pope? Homer himself could not fire the heart of the sickly little man. Taine, a standard writer on English literature, says :—“Living ideas and candid passions are necessary to make a poet, but in him, (Pope) seen closely, we find that everything, to his very person, is tricked out and artificial.” While quoting Taine, we must say that we think he would be a more original and a more trustworthy guide to English literature than Craik and Dunlop combined; he views English writers and English writings from the standpoint of a learned and impartial foreigner; and as a foreigner, free from English prejudices, he sees faults and beauties to which our perception is insensible, unless attention is particularly directed to them.

In conclusion, why should we be limited to so few authors, with half as many commentators? In my opinion, the lectures should take the place of the commentaries and

literary histories; thus giving the student opportunity to take up more of our English standard writers. In honour work in Classics, something like thirty authors are read, and lectures delivered all through the college course; in our native language, that in which we speak and think and write, we are limited to some eight authors, and receive lectures upon them during one year of our college life. The winning of the Shakespeare gold medal would be a light thing indeed, were it not for the really hard work necessary to master the textbooks on the language, which, by-the-bye, share in the few lectures allotted to English literature. And let me say that when our graduates go out into the world they are not judged by the amount of classical learning they possess, simply because they have little opportunity to display such learning, and that most Canadians could not appreciate such display if it were made. They are judged by their ability to speak and write good terse English; and such ability they will never get without a better training than is now offered by McGill.

I hope you will be able to find space for the insertion of these remarks, and oblige

R.

AMERICA BEFORE COLUMBUS.

(Concluded.)

In the spring of 1007, Thorfinn Karlsefn, a Norwegian prince, having married Gudrida the widow of Thorstein, a bold navigator and a son of Eric the Red, was induced by his adventurous spouse to explore the coasts of Vinland. Such a wedding tour, unlike our present trips to New York or to Philadelphia, perhaps, was one of danger and uncertainty. Thorfinn therefore equipped three vessels, having on board 160 men and an abundance of cattle struck out boldly for the “Land of Grapes.” As one might naturally expect he at first lost his way in the Northern Seas, but succeeded at last in reaching Vinland, where he established himself with all his men. He named the country Hop and left a curious and most exact description of Mount Haup Bay.

Troubles with the natives, however, soon came to mar the peace of the colony, and though victorious over the long-haired squarefaced enemy, still Thorfinn deemed it prudent to leave the country after a sojourn of five years. During this period his wife presented him with a son, the first Norwegian born on these mysterious shores. He also left in commemoration of his passage an inscription on the rocky banks of the Taunton River, of which it now remains for us to speak.

A large square block of gneiss presents on the river side a flat polished front, and is covered over with characters which for many years baffled the skill while they puzzled the brains of inquiring antiquarians. Time, perseverance, and deep study at last enabled two Danish professors to unravel the mystery, to decipher the hieroglyphics. The substance of the whole confirming the tale of the Saga, which, we may here remark, are with a few exceptions true and faithful recitals.

In one of our local reviews there is cited a French author, M. Gravier, who, having perused the writings of several eminent antiquarians, and visited the inscription with its surroundings, expresses a confident belief in its authenticity.

Thorfinn arrived safely in Norway, where he was received with the greatest honours by a people ever ready, to admire and encourage naval triumphs, and hazardous expeditions. He subsequently returned to Iceland where he died. Three bishops, several princes and the well known Magnus Stephenson are among his descendants.

Several of his companions set sail for Vinland, but simply retraced the footsteps of their chieftain.

Meanwhile a number of hardy and ambitious colonists flocked to Vinland, lured by its beauty, fertility, and healthy climate; they always came by Greenland which was not then the barren, ice bound shore which borders Baffin's Bay. Ocean currents had so altered its climate, that green fields, and wooded hill sides might have been seen where extend the deserts of the present day. There were also several churches and a cathedral, the remains of which have been lately discovered.

To resume our narrative. Eric-Upsi bishop of Gardar, the site of the cathedral we have just mentioned, undertook a voyage to Vinland, and finding there churches and villages established a see with the permission of the reigning pontiff. The curious round tower of Newport is supposed with good reason to be a baptistery of the time, and in fact its style of architecture seems to be a rude imitation of those seen in the ancient cities of Europe. It is stated, and on excellent authority, that the crusades were preached in Vinland in the 13th century. This assertion is also confirmed by a recital of the time. There, among the steel clad warriors of France, Britain, and Germany, were seen the stalwart forms of men from beyond the sea, their dress, manners, and appearance, contrasting strangely with the polished armour and waving plumes of their associates of the old world. Later on the tithes of Vinland are mentioned in the registers at Rome, where they are still extant.

We thus behold Vinland in its most flourishing condition, colonists came unceasingly, when a change in the ocean currents put an end to its prosperity.

In Greenland the days grew colder and the summers shorter, crops were blighted, and from the mountain sides the ever advancing ice fields invaded the plains. The inhabitants sought more genial climes, leaving houses and fields to the solitude of the ice desert. The "Black Pest" broke out in Europe and ravaged America; pirates intercepted the once frequent communications so that in 1377 the bishop of Gardar having died no news of it reached Norway till 1383. As Iceland and Greenland furnished Vinland with colonists their fall brought about its neglect, and soon little or nothing was heard of it. So ended Norwegian relations with America.

Other nations are said to have tried their fortunes in the New World, notably the Irish, and the Chinese, and the latter in some of their old writings described it as Fou-Sang.

However we cannot for a moment imagine that Columbus was not a discoverer. His knowledge of America was only that which his study of natural sciences and personal observation had given him. Moreover it is but reasonable to suppose, that the possession of such documents as we now find, would have smoothed the rugged path of ridicule and of opposition which he had to traverse.

He is said to have often quoted those striking and almost prophetic lines of Seneca:

Venient annis saecula seris
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus,
Typhis que novos detegat orbes,
Nec sit terris ultima Thule.

The time has come, and fairer lands than those of the older world are inhabited by an enlightened generation, although they lie beyond the cold and distant, *Ultima Thule*.

VIATOR.

COLLEGE WORLD.

Harvard crew are working at the machines. The papers give daily reports of progress.

A football match lately played between the Harvard and Yale Freshmen terminated in favour of Harvard.

Yale Freshmen have put a crew in training to represent the class in all boating contests in the spring.

Two new professorships have been established at Princeton, one in architecture and the applied arts, and the other in mechanics and civil engineering.

The authorities of Boston University are considering the plan of limiting the size of each class in the Academic Department, and filling the same, year by year, by competitive examinations.

The third Inter-Collegiate Contest came off in New York, on January 3rd. Looking over the list of Colleges named as contestants, we notice that the higher class Universities are conspicuous by their absence.

Dartmouth Navy lost its boats and boat-house in a gale, on Saturday night, January 20th, 1877. The loss is very heavy, amounting in all to nearly \$1,300. We cannot refrain from offering our sympathies to our Hanover friends on the occasion of such a calamity.

The Rowing Association of American Colleges held its Seventh Annual Convention in December last. July 11th is named as the date of the University race; Greenwood Lake, about forty miles from New York, will probably be the place where it is to come off.

The Yale students have managed to get the better of their Faculty in a very ingenious manner. The professors had ordered them to cease all singing in the college buildings (probably because they sang so very badly), and the students, who have regular attendance at chapel, retorted by considering the rule as applying to the hymns, and allowed the professors to sustain the chapel singing by themselves. Our brethren at Yale evidently go in for "whole hog or none."

EXCHANGES.

—The last number of the *Harvard Lampoon* is considerably ahead of the one immediately preceeding it. On the whole it is characterized by remarkable originality and *esprit*. The "religious editor" is getting rather stale; but if he is a permanent institution, we will submit with the best possible grace to his not unpleasant jokes.

—The gem of the *Harvard Advocate* is an article on Slang, as witty as it is original. After the regulation platitudes we have been bothered with upon the evils and vulgarity of talking in a free and easy manner, it is refreshing to tumble upon so much common sense. "The Profanity of our Ancestors" is interesting and readable; and the verses which open the number "Lines to myself," have some rather ingenious rhymings.

—Of the *Bowdoin Orient* in general, we cannot give an opinion, as the number we have before us, (January 17th,) has two papers in it which are not due to students, and which are far above the usual style of a college paper. We refer to "An Occasional Poem" by S. V. Cole, and "Reminiscences of College Friends," in which occur the names of Longfellow, Hawthorne, and other famous Americans.

—The *Dalhousie Gazette* for January 6th comes out rigorously upon "Dirt" and "Day-dreams," and in both holds different views from most people.

—That "newsy weekly," the *Cornell Era*, is again to hand. Would that its Xmas vacation had been indefinitely prolonged, or that defeat in the late Inter-Collegiate contest had destroyed the sickening self-adulation which crowds its pages. The exchange column opens with some ranting smart-talk, characterized by a painful lack of common sense. If the editorials of the "monthly, tri-weekly or quarterly" are merely "somebody else and water," we dread the thought of what its own must be.

—The *Dartmouth* says "we have in vain tried to glean from it (the McGill Gazette,) a picture of the student-life at McGill." Now in the first place, we humbly submit that it is not our duty to give such a picture, as most of our subscribers know all about it already. In the second place, we fail to see that the *Dartmouth* sets us a good example in the matter, and finally, we maintain that there is no student-life at all at McGill. We have no dormitories, and our students are scattered broad-cast over a city containing one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

As for the *Dartmouth* itself, we must say that it is one of the foremost of college journals, and a credit to its student-editors. One article however astonishes us not-a-little; it is a paper upon "Our Indian Policy," which decides that "humanitarian sentiment towards the Indian has generally been a mistaken zeal." It is not the sentiment which has been mistaken; the mistake has been in the selection of men to carry out the idea of that sentiment. The Indians on our side of the line can bring ten thousand fighting men into the field, and the force which matches them, and performs police-duty in Manitoba besides, is three-hundred strong. Yet we have not had a white-man, as such, murdered by Indians for years.

In another place the following sentence occurs: "The swarthy warrior, (painted by novelists,) who in dignity and valor rivalled an Alcibiades," "is very different from the degraded skulking Sioux or Chippewa." The only remark we have to make on this, is, that depraved skulking vagabonds as they are, it is not long since they overthrew the best troops of the United States in a pitched battle.

There are many other opinions in this article to which we take exception, but we have given too much space already to the matter.

PERSONALS.

—'75, Mr. D. F. Wilkins, B. A., B. A. Sc., is now Professor of Mathematics and Chemistry in Albert University.

—Mr. J. E. Robidoux, advocate, has been appointed Lecturer in Civil Law; this position having been rendered vacant by the severe illness of His Honor Judge Rainville, for some months past.

—'75, Mr. W. F. Ritchie B. A., is at present in Heidelberg Germany.

—'73, '76, Mr. A. F. Ritchie, B. A., M. D., C. M., is walking the hospitals in London E.

—'75, It is with great pleasure we record the late marriage of Mr. Russ Wood Huntingdon, B. C. L., to an American lady, and as congratulations are yet in order, heartily extend them our best wishes.

—Messrs. Greenshields, Doherty and Bissaillon have been admitted to practice at the Bar of Montreal.

'74, J. J. R. Spong, B. C. L., is at present teaching in New York.

—Having noticed the absence of one of our favorite nurses from her post of duty, we naturally asked the reason of the same, and in response to our enquiry were told that she had given up the care of many for the more pleasant occupation of looking after one; in other words she had gone to be married.

Well! "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good," and though the M. G. Hospital loses a most efficient and faithful servant, yet we are sure that the gentleman who was so lucky as to win nurse Randall for his own, has indeed won a prize. Ever ready, attentive and kind, thoroughly up to her duties, we feel sure that

in her case all expectations were fully realised; and now that she has left us, bearing with her the kind wishes of all connected with the hospital, we trust that her chosen path will be one of pleasantness; and that she will sometimes give a thought to those sincere friends and fellow-workers she leaves behind in Montreal, and more especially to that one in particular, whose kind care and sisterly affection made leaving home an easier and pleasanter matter than it generally is.

ITEMS.

—At a meeting of students held for the purpose, a Hockey Club was formed, the following students being selected officers:—President, A. D. Taylor; Captain, Harry Abbott; Secretary and Treasurer, R. J. Howard. Committee, Fred. Torrance, Lorne Campbell, W. Redpath. A few members had a game on Wednesday, 31st January.

—The O. B. J. J's. will hold their first annual spree on the evening of April 1st, 1877.—*Advt.*

—The exuberant freshman now declaims:—"I am that Miss C——." !!

—Old Prob. says, on or about the 14th inst., look out for Valentines.

—A Senior has lost a coverless inkbottle, which he describes as an heirloom. We are better informed than that, however; we are quite certain that said article was filched by said Senior in his Freshman year.

—*O Pudor! O Pietas!* A medical freshman has at last been found who is afflicted with modesty! *Witness* please copy.

—We are happy to be able to state that new and more suitable desks have been provided in the Clinical theatre, at the hospital.

Special lectures on *Mollusca* are being delivered by Dr. Carpenter, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 2 o'clock, in the Museum. As Dr. Carpenter has made a specialty of this subject, we promise an interesting course to those who attend.

—In view of the probable pan-slavic occupation of Europe, it has been suggested that a chair of the Russian language be substituted in place of the present German one.

—The Rink is in operation; but the skaters are not.

—The First Year recently started a strike in classics, by handing round the following lines:—

Strike Freshman! strike with care,
Strike in the presence of the Lecturaire.

—The following have been handed to us for insertion by the secretary of the Reading Room Committee:—

Thornhill, Dec. 12th, 1876.

DEAR SIRS.—I have the honour to inform you that the two newspaper racks at present in the Reading Room, and one other, to be placed there as soon as required, which have been prepared at a cost of \$25, are presented to the Student's Reading Room by Mrs. Henry Lyman.

Trusting that they long may be of service to the Undergraduates,

I remain, my dear Sirs,

Yours very truly,

To CHAS. H. GOULD, Esq.,

H. H. LYMAN.

Sec. Reading Room Committee.

Dec. 22d, 1876.

DEAR SIR.—At a meeting held on Tuesday last by the Committee of the Student's Reading Room, it was unanimously resolved: "That the warmest thanks of this Committee be tendered to Mrs. Henry Lyman for her valuable present to the Reading Room, and also for the kind manner in which the presentation was made."

It is with great pleasure that I write, in compliance with my instructions, to inform you of this vote of thanks, and to request of you the kindness to communicate the same to Mrs. Lyman.